

Eaton Memorial Chapel of Trinity Episcopal Church
710 22nd Street
Galveston
Galveston County
Texas

HABS No. TX-295

HABS
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18-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

EATON MEMORIAL CHAPEL OF TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Location: 710 22nd Street, Galveston, Galveston County,
Texas.

Present Owner: Eaton Memorial Chapel

Significance: The building is a memorial to Galveston's pioneer
protestant missionary and good example of the
Gothic Revival style.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Built 1878-1882. Benjamin Eaton had recognized at an early date the need for a school, but conditions were not favorable at that time. Following the close of the Civil War, however, he had organized the Ladies' Parochial Society whose purpose would be to raise funds for the erection of a building to be used as a chapel and Sunday School.

In 1873, two years after Eaton's death, the Society determined to raise the funds necessary to build the school. Typical social entertainments and lunches were conducted by the ladies throughout the next nine years in an effort to raise the money.

At last on April 30, 1875 lots 8 and 9 in Block 322 were purchased for the "purpose of erecting a Chapel and School, said Chapel to be called Eaton."

Little was done at that point until January, 1878. By the end of that month, Henry Rosenberg reported that he had completed purchase of the brick which was then on the property and that construction would undoubtedly begin within thirty days. He also reported that the various architect's drawings and plans proposed for the building could be viewed at his office.

Rosenberg was a prominent Galveston merchant and banker, later philanthropist, vestryman of the church and had been a close friend of Eaton. He took an active hand in seeing that the work was accomplished and served as chairman of the building committee. He also contributed from time to time whenever money fell short and thereby provided an estimated one half of the total cost of \$18,000.

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Work was not actually begun until May, 1878 and although uninterrupted, as it was reported, nevertheless proceeded slowly. It seems that the building was substantially completed by the summer of 1879 but it was not until the summer of 1881 that the building was opened for use. Dedication ceremonies were held on March 19, 1882.

2. Architects: The firm of Clayton and Lynch were the architects of the building. Clayton, however, was probably responsible for the design, as Lynch was primarily a surveyor and engineer. Clayton at this time was well known in Galveston and had begun to receive numerous important commissions. He was Texas' outstanding nineteenth century architect.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Benjamin Eaton was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1806 or 1807. Little is known of his early life. He subsequently immigrated as a young man to St. Louis, Missouri where he became inspired by the church.

He attracted the interest of Bishop Kemper who in March 1839 ordained him deacon in Christ Church, St. Louis. Late in that year Eaton was sent to Mineral Point, Wisconsin for the purpose of organizing a vestry and building a church. His work there was successful and by the early summer of 1840 he accepted a similar post at nearby Green Bay. There on September 20, 1840 Bishop Kemper admitted Eaton to priests' orders.

Shortly afterward, however, Eaton requested to be appointed a missionary to Texas, largely because of health reasons. He arrived in Galveston in January 1841 and shortly established a vestry there.

Eaton served his people well and was instrumental in the growth of his Church during his tenure. In 1871 he died and was buried beneath the chancel floor of the church he had helped build.

C. Bibliography:

Galveston News, July 6, 1879

Morgan, William M. Trinity Protestant Episcopal Church, Galveston, Texas, 1841-1953, Houston and Galveston: Anson Jones Press, 1959.

Prepared by: John C. Garner, Jr.
Director
Galveston Architecture Inventory
March 17, 1967

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PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building is a two story rectangular mass with typical projections and moldings and a high pitched hipped roof characteristic of the nineteenth century eclectic French Gothic style.
2. Condition of fabric: The walls are stuccoed and are in good condition, no cracks or openings are visible. The roof is also well maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building is 43 feet wide and the transepts project four feet giving a maximum width of 51 feet. It is 78 feet long. The roof ridge is approximately 75 feet above the ground level.
2. Foundations: It is believed that the foundations are of brick, probably isolated piers.
3. Wall construction: The walls are constructed of brick with a stucco finish that has been made to resemble ashlar construction by incised mortar joints. A heavily splayed base encircles the building and is repeated in the upper floor window sills.
4. Structural system: Exterior walls are load bearing and have arched openings. Interior supports are load bearing walls and square piers. Square buttresses at the corners and mid-walls project above the cornice and terminate in molded pinnacles. All buttresses have splayed weatherings and heavily splayed bases. In addition the windows also have heavily splayed sills.
5. Porches: The entrance portal has a recessed doorway framed by a drop-arch having several concentric bands of receding moldings. It is terminated by a gable and has a marble plaque inscribed with "Eaton Memorial Chapel" in the tympanum.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Symmetrical in design, the principal entrance is on the east facade. This front wall projects slightly and terminates in a gable. The front doorway is recessed several feet in the brick portal. Doors are a pair of molded panel wood doors.

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- b. Windows: On the east facade the central portal is flanked by coupled lancet windows and above is a trio of adjoining lancet windows. The central window is divided by a vertical mullion and is slightly taller.

The north and south facades are symmetrical and have a series of lancet windows on the second level. The projecting transepts divide these facades into three sections with two lancet windows located in each end bay. An arcade of five windows extends between the corner buttresses of the transepts at the upper level and each tympanum has a traceried rose window.

Ground floor windows correspond closely to those above with the exception of being designed with pseudo-four centered arches.

Window glass is yellow tinted and has a diagonal raised ridge pattern.

7. Roof: The roof is a high-pitched hipped construction intersected by the gables of the transepts and front projection. Slate shingles.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plan: The lower floor consists of a large central room, a front vestibule and stair hall and a southeast room that was a ladies parlor. The winding stair leads to the second floor which consists of a large space, originally the chapel.
2. Stairway: The stair is located in the northeast corner of the front vestibule. It is wood with a solid panel railing and has a sweeping curving ascent to the upper floor.
3. Floor: The floors are 2" oak boards.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Finish on the lower floor is modern. Walls have the original beaded wainscot but the upper areas are covered with fabric. Ceilings are fiberboard tile.

On the upper level, the finish is largely original. Again there is a beaded wainscot and walls are plaster. The ceiling is the outstanding feature, being a tour-de-force of the Gothic style. It is paneled and divided into bays by massive intersecting beams reinforced by respond shafts and capitals. Heavy, ornate plaster pendants hang from the intersections. The wood is "coraled" and stenciled.

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5. Doors: A pair of doors connects the chapel with the vestibule on the upper level. They have six panels. Those on the lower floor are also wood six panel doors.

6. Trim: Wood trim around all openings.

D. Site:

1. Orientation and general setting: The building occupies the southeast corner of 22nd Street and Ball Avenue and faces east.

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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Galveston Survey was jointly sponsored by the National Park Service, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation and the Galveston Historical Foundation Inc., and developed under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). The historical data was written by John C. Garner, Jr., acting as the Director of the Galveston Architecture Inventory. The written data was edited for transmittal to the Library of Congress in the summer of 1980 by Kent R. Newell of the HABS staff. The photographs were taken by Allen Stross in the summer of 1967.